

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 1
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Biodiversity Conservation Division
Topic: THREATENED SPECIES
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

I understand Minister Hunt has made a commitment to halt loss of native mammal species by 2020: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/oct/16/australia-pledges-to-halt-loss-of-native-mammal-species-by-2020>

- a. Has he committed any extra funding to wildlife matters, since as the Minister admits, our track record has been very poor?
- b. Has the Department offered any advice about how much it would cost to achieve that target?
- c. Do you know how many native species we might expect to lose before that date (2020)?

Answer:

- a. The Australian Government has committed \$2 billion dollars to natural resource management which includes protection of threatened species and ecological communities within its scope. Through the National Landcare Programme and 25th Anniversary Landcare grants, the Green Army Programme, the 20 Million Trees Programme and the National Environment Science Programme, the Government is providing funding for species protection. For example, 44 projects in the first round of the Green Army Programme include specific outcomes for threatened species, including combating the threat of feral cats. It is expected that the final list of projects funded through the 20 million trees programme and the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants will also include projects specifically focused on threatened plants and animals.

The Minister has also announced funding of \$2 million to be spent on 10 threatened species projects within the Commonwealth National Parks estate, as well as funding for dugong management, whale and dolphin protection and turtle eggs protection from wild pigs.

- b. The Department continues to provide advice to the minister on the costs associated with specific threatened species projects as well as indicative costings for threatened species recovery plans and the actions contained within them.
- c. The Minister has indicated that the number of native plants and animals facing the threat of extinction is unacceptable, and that is why in July 2014 he appointed Australia's first Threatened Species Commissioner, who is bringing a new national focus to the conservation efforts for Australia's endangered native flora and fauna.

It is scientifically and technically not possible to predict the number of species that may be lost before 2020. The Government is making every effort, including through appointing the Threatened Species Commissioner, to prevent extinctions and promote species recovery.